



U.S. Department of Justice
United States Attorney
District of Kansas

NEWS RELEASE

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FORMER DIRECTOR OF CENTURY II CONVENTION CENTER PLEADS GUILTY

WICHITA, Kan. – United States Attorney Eric Melgren announced that **Larry Lahaie**, 49, Wichita, Kansas, entered a guilty plea on August 23, 2004, before U.S. District Judge Monti L. Belot to one count of **making false statements to a law enforcement officer and one count of mail fraud**.

Melgren said that Lahaie admitted at his plea that in June of 2002 he was hired as the director of Century II and it was his responsibility to oversee the Central Ticket Agency, a private contractor with the City of Wichita that sold tickets for Century II events and collected and disbursed ticket money, and the Wichita Canteen Company, a catering business that provided food service at Century II events. Lahaie admitted that he had direct contact with the Central Ticket Agency (CTA) and the Wichita Canteen Company (WCC) personnel on behalf of the City of Wichita and that he oversaw the performance of services by CTA and WCC.

Lahaie admitted that in June of 2002 he was aware that Central Ticket Agency was behind in paying the money it owed for Century II events and for rent to the City of Wichita. Lahaie further admitted that sometime in 2002 and continuing until April of 2003 he solicited money totaling approximately \$9,280 from the Central Ticket Agency, during which time the Central Ticket Agency was not compelled by Lahaie to pay the City of Wichita all of the money owed for events or rent.

Lahaie admitted that sometime between August 18 and 22, 2003, he contacted an employee at Wichita Canteen Company and asked for \$9,280; that on August 22, 2003, the Wichita Canteen Company provided Lahaie a cashiers check for \$9,280; and Lahaie signed a document stating that he would repay the \$9,280 in thirty days or pay interest thereafter. Lahaie further admitted that on August 21, 2003, he signed a letter with the same Wichita

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Canteen Company employee authorizing Wichita Canteen Company to use the Century II kitchen for other Wichita Canteen Company clients in return for the City receiving a five per cent commission on these sales. Lahaie further admitted that on September 2, 2003, he was contacted by agents with the FBI and asked if he knew about CTA loaning money to City employees and he told the FBI he did not. Lahaie admitted that on September 20, 2003, he paid the Wichita Canteen Company \$9,280.

Lahaie admitted that his activities between 2002 and continuing through September of 2003 denied the taxpayers of the City of Wichita the intangible right to his honest services in dealing with two city vendors and, as such, violated his fiduciary duties to the taxpayers of the City of Wichita.

Lahaie faces a maximum of five years in federal prison, without parole, for making a false statement to a law enforcement officer and a maximum of twenty years for mail fraud. Sentencing is set for November 8, 2004, at 1:30 p.m.

Melgren commended the excellent work of the FBI and the Wichita Police Department in this investigation.